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A new *Microscapha* from the Nepal Himalayas

(Coleoptera, Melandryidae) *

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Abstract

Microscapha nepalensis sp.n. is described from eastern Nepal, differing from the related congeners by the peculiar pattern of coloration, finer elytral punctuation, larger body size, and some other characters.

Introduction

The tropical and, to a lesser extent, subtropical melandryid genus *Microscapha* LECONTE 1886 has been known by a dozen species ranging from the Americas to Japan, southeastern Asia, New Guinea, and equatorial Africa (NIKITSKY & BELOW 1982, SASAJI 1987). No Himalayan representatives have hitherto been reported, the nearest records being confined to Malaya, Japan, and the Philippines. Interesting seems the discovery of a further species in the Himalayas of Nepal, a unique region because of its highly heterogenous fauna (MARTENS 1984).

Microscapha nepalensis sp.n.
(Figs 1-3)

Holotype ♀: Nepal, Sankhua Sabha Distr., Arun Valley, between Mure and Hurure, 2050-2150 m, mixed broad-leaved forest, 9.-17.VI.1988, leg. J. MARTENS & W. SCHAWALLER (deposited in Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart, Germany).

Description

Body oblong-oval, 2.15x longer than wide, maximum width shortly before middle (fig. 1). Colour brown to piceous, in some places pitchy-rusty tint; apical parts of elytra somewhat paler; head reddish-brown; mouthparts and antennomeres 1-3 yellow-brown; apices of antennomeres 4-6 and all antennomeres 7-11 completely darkened; femora, tibiae and tarsi reddish-brown. Upper side clothed with dense, adpressed, yellowish-grey pubescence. Last segment of maxillary palpi triangularly broadened, 1.4-1.5x longer than maximum width and considerably broader than basal segments. Antennae (fig. 2) short, 4-4.5x shorter than body, antennomeres 1-2 large; first joint 1.3-1.4x longer than wide and 1.2-1.3x shorter than second; latter 1.5x longer than wide; third joint 1.7-2.0x more narrow and shorter than second; 4th joint subequally long and wide, 1.5-1.7x shorter than third; antennomeres 5 and 6 subequal to 4th, 6th being very slightly transverse; antennomeres 7 and 8 slightly broadened, latter a little broader than former, either slightly transverse; antennomeres 9-11 broadened into a loose club, all joints considerably longer than joints 2-8 combined; antennomere 9 1.6-1.7x longer and 1.4-1.5x broader than 8th, being subequally long and wide and subequal

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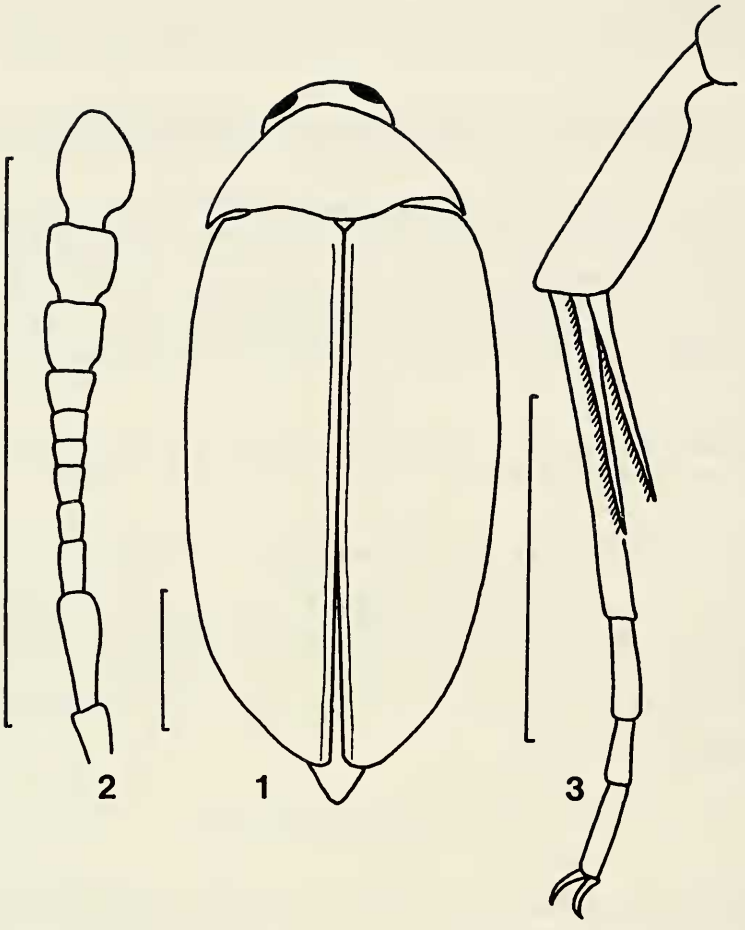

Figs 1-3. *Microscapha nepalensis* sp.n., holotype. 1. habitus (dorsal view); 2. antenna; 3. hind tibia and tarsus. Scales: 0.5 mm.

to 9th; joint 11 1.4x longer than 10th and than width. Head finely and sparsely punctured and very delicately transversaly shagreened. Eyes transverse, flat, strongly emarginate anteriorly, interocular distance 1.5-1.7x shorter than transverse diameter of the eye. Pronotum 1.7-1.9x broader than head and 1.85x broader than long, maximum width at base, both anterior and posterior corners rounded, latter expressed more distinctly than former, lateral edge entirely rimmed. Base of pronotum laterally without rim, distinctly bisinuate, with medial part broadly protruding and another poorly developed concavity from each side of the base near the corners. Surface of the pronotum convex, without paired impressions at base, very finely, medium-densely punctured and very delicately transversely shagreened. Scutellum roundly-triangular. Elytra oblong-oval, convex, 1.75x longer than maximum width. Base of elytra moderately and very finely punctured, these punctures being a bit larger and denser than on pronotum. Apices of elytrae more densely and coarser punctured, rounded, presutural furrow well developed. Elytral disk very delicately transversely shagreened.

Prosternal process triangular, considerably failing to reach the posterior edge of procoxae. Mesosternal process dividing mesocoxae likewise significantly failing to reach the posterior margin of mesocoxae. Mesothoracic keel in front of mesosternal process well-expressed. Metathorax considerably longer than first visible abdominal sternite. Median metathoracic impression line-shaped, only a bit broadened posteriorly and only very slightly not reaching the mesocoxae. From each side of the median impression in front of the

metacoxae there are two short impressions directed obliquely forward and outward. Metathorax slightly shining, finely and sparsely punctured on medial part, more densely punctured and distinctly transversely shagreened on lateral parts. Metepisterna very strongly narrowed caudad, 3.1-3.2x longer than maximum width. Anterior, almost impunctate part of metacoxae narrow,6-7x longer than wide, directed transversely and somewhat obliquely out towards posterior edge of metepisterna, this part being 1.25x longer than metepisterna. Abdomen dull, very finely punctured and delicately transversely shagreened.

Penultimate joint of both fore and middle tarsi bilobed, but the tarsi in general not broadened. Metatibiae short, subequal in length to tarsomere 1, the longer of metatibial spurs as long as 2/3 of the length of tarsomere 1, subsequent three tarsomeres very slightly shorter than first, with the second subequal to the forth but considerably longer than the third (fig. 3).

Body length: 2.4 mm.

Relationships

Based on the available species key (NIKITSKY & BELOW 1982) and subsequent information (SASAJI 1987), the new species differs from the particularly closely related *Microscapha malayana* CHAMPION 1916 from Pening/Malaya by the darker coloration, bichromous antennae, somewhat larger size (the coloration of *malayana* is reddish-brown, the antennae are entirely pale, the body is 1.72 mm long), and from the Japanese *Microscapha isensis* SASAJI 1987 by the darker vertigial part of the head and underside, darkened five (not four) distal antennomeres, somewhat larger body size (1.53-2.12 mm in *isensis*), finer elytral punctuation, and in other characters. All these species belong to a swarm of quite closely related forms, restricted to the tropical and/or subtropical regions of Asia.

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